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This month’s cover model is Cloud, who was adopted into a loving home from House Rabbit Society International headquarters in November 2017.

Cover photograph by Sandy Parshall, HRS Program Manager
EVERY YEAR WE HEAR ABOUT

a number of emergency rabbit rescue situations around the country that involve anywhere from 15 to 1500 rabbits.

In order to help, in 2007 we started the Emergency Rescue Fund. All donations coming to HRS that specify “Emergency Rescue Fund” will go toward these grants. We use these funds to make targeted grants of $250 to $1000 to animal rescue organizations that are involved in a large rescue of many rabbits. House Rabbit Society’s Chapter Grant program seeks to assist HRS chapters in their mission of rabbit rescue or education and outreach. Below are our grant recipients for the second half of 2017. Congratulations to these great rescues and HRS chapters!

To see past winners and apply, visit: rabbit.org/the-hrs-emergency-grant-program

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Bunny Bunch Rabbit Rescue
Montclair, CA
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped 24 rabbits from a hoarding situation.
bunnybunch.org

Furrytail Life Rabbit Rescue & Sanctuary
Phoenix, AZ
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped 46 rabbits dumped in a local park.
facebook.com/furrytailliferabbitrescue

Golden Isles House Rabbit Rescue
Brunswick, GA
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped 16 rabbits from a hoarding situation.
adoptapet.com/goldenislesrabbits

WAGS
Westminster, CA
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped over 130 rabbits from a hoarding situation.
wagspetadoption.org

AAE Conigli
Italy
$1500
Funds from this chapter grant helped our Italy chapter translate education materials.
aaeconigli.it

Southwest Florida House Rabbit Rescue, Esterno, FL
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped 47 rabbits affected by Hurricane Irma.
swflhouserabbitrescue.org

Warren Peace Bunny Sanctuary
Oyama, BC, Canada
$1000
Funds from this emergency grant helped 29 rabbits from Keremeos, Canada.
warrenpeacebunnysanctuary.org
When I tell people I have house rabbits, 99 times out of 100, the reaction is positive. People are surprised, curious, or downright delighted. But, every once in a while when I say, “I have rabbits,” someone replies, “Oh, really? Do you want another one?” This can be the start of a difficult conversation. For friends struggling to care for their rabbits, it can be tricky to give advice without judgment. Young children sometimes lose interest in their pets and look for the next new thing without thinking of the long-term repercussions. Even adults can get in a rut with cage cleaning, maintenance, and care. Focusing only on the chores, they fall out of love with their pets without realizing it. But, as we all know, putting a rabbit up for adoption is a drastic step. If it is at all possible to rekindle the spark of love between rabbit and owner, then there is still hope. To help with these difficult conversations, here is some advice to rekindle the relationship with your rabbit. Even if you are still head-over-heels for your bunny, these activities can add fun to your bond.
HOST A PLAY DATE

When was the last time you had a date? A play date that is! If it’s been a while, invite your friends over to play with you and your rabbit together. Show your friends how your bun likes to be petted. Share your favorite treats and toys. If your rabbit is comfortable with your friends, they might even hold him or her. Play dates can help strengthen your bond with your rabbit and can also help your rabbit feel a stronger bond with you. When I had just one rabbit, we would sometimes get stuck in a routine. It wasn’t until I started spending time with other rabbit guardians and swapping stories that I realized how unique my Todd was. Likewise, when I introduced Todd to other people, he started to become more outgoing and playful.

EXPAND THE FAMILY

If you’re ready to move your rabbit-human relationship to the next level, consider adopting another rabbit as a friend for your rabbit! The process of bonding two or more rabbits requires a little bit of work, but for the patient caretaker this can open a whole new world of rabbit-rabbit and rabbit-human interaction. Todd was a single rabbit for many years before meeting his companion Zoey. After a few weeks of negotiations (and with lots of help from the House Rabbit Society website for bonding advice: rabbit.org/tag/bonding), Todd and Zoey finally accepted each other. The two buns started a licking frenzy that has never stopped. Watching them groom and play is a total joy. The best part, of course, is seeing how happy they make each other!

DO A PHOTOSHOOT

If you can manage it, a professional photoshoot with your pets is money well spent. Decorating your home with portraits of your bunnies can help you remember just how special they are. The bunnies may not notice the new wall art, but they will respond to your love and attention.

You can also just grab your camera and create a photoshoot of your own. There are lots of tips online for taking high-quality pet photos. First and foremost, try to use natural lighting in place of indoor lamps to avoid unexpected color casts. Avoid flash photography, which might scare your rabbits. Next, position the camera near the ground at rabbit-level. Rather than force the rabbits into position or make them stay still, let them roam around and follow. You can add rabbit-safe props and entice them with a treat! After the pictures are taken, try adding filters to give your photos the final touch. Whether you end up with a classic black and white photo of your bonded pair or a neon-highlighted binky action shot, you can to display your photos with pride!

TEACH A NEW TRICK

Even older buns can learn new tricks. Many rabbits can learn to come to you, stand up, and even flop at the cue of a clicker. The same principles that apply to training dogs can work for rabbits. Positive reinforcement is the key. Clicker training starts with one small treat and then the sound of the clicker replaces the treat as a signal. Kind words and petting also positively reinforce desired behaviors. Learning something new together can help you feel connected to your bun and help challenge your bunny, too. If you approach training as a stimulating task, with plenty of praise along the way, it will be fun for your rabbit!
My first stint at fostering a bunny was not a success. It was, in fact, a foster “failure.” Within hours of the dear white bunny’s arrival, my husband patted his perfect little head and announced, “This rabbit is never leaving this house.” And he never did.

Never mind that we already had another bunny who wasn’t keen on Foster Bun becoming a permanent family member. Never mind that we had signed up for only a month-long foster assignment. Never mind that bonding the new guy to the resident bun would end up taking over a year. The truth is, that scruff y guy stole our hearts within minutes. He was a professional lagomorph heart thief.

I thought a lot about rabbits as heart thieves as I went on to successfully foster other bunnies. Their subtle and sneaky attempts to win you over were as varied as the most skilled romancer: dutifully displaying meticulous litter box habits, tossing plastic keys with charm, fl opping out right at your feet.

I steeled myself from feeling too much emotion. I am but a bridge, was my mantra (thanks to a pep talk from a seasoned foster friend), a transition between bunnies being homeless and rescued to finding their forever homes. I took pride in my bridge status and showered my foster buns with five-star rabbit resort amenities: cottontail cottages, fluffy towels, fresh hay, and organic mixed greens salads that my husband envied. I told my foster rabbits how important they were in the world, and each evening ended with a whisper in their ears: “Have sweet dreams of safe meadows.”

Sometimes I even imagined that they would stay with me forever. I called that “dangerous daydreaming.” How many bunnies could one fit into a small house (bonding issues notwithstanding)? What if, miraculously, all the bunnies would fall in love at first sight? I imagined a room full of twelve doll beds all lined up with a bunny atop each one, just like the scene from Ludwig Bemelmans’ “Madeline.” Twelve (heck, maybe twenty!) litter boxes in a row; twenty salad plates ready to go. I loved the idea of never having to say goodbye.

In time, I established an unspoken agreement in the language of the lagomorph. I sat quietly, the way rabbits do when they’re assessing every detail of their world. My ears alert, my nose even twitching. “Listen,” I told each precious, furry guest, “You don’t have to be thieves. You don’t have to steal anything from me. My heart, I give freely.”

When the fostering date comes to an end, I still might burst into tears as I drive away with an empty bunny carrier beside me. But they are also tears of happiness (HOPPY tears!). I leave content with the knowledge that each bunny now is safe and loved in their new forever home. That sweet goal of adoption has been reached!

I’ll fondly remember the round, trusting eyes, the joyful binkies and unexpected nose bonks, all those furry forms of pickpocketing. The foster bunnies take a piece of my heart with them when they leave. They actually own real estate in my heart, and they didn’t pay a dime.

Lagomorph heart thieves, all.

Lagomorph Heart Thieves

by Diana Rousseau

Photographs of Rufus by Diana Rousseau
H

e munched on my toes. Little
nips on my toes that weren’t
painful. My toes were painted
pale green like tips of fresh romaine
lettuce so I couldn’t blame him. I woke
up that way each morning. I stayed at
my friend’s flat in Studio City in Los
Angeles, California.

He was a hairy little beast. Chubb-
by Max was a Lionhead with black
and gray luxurious hair whipping
around his stout body like a cascading
cape. Three-inch long ears tufted like
golden scallops of endive standing at
attention atop his little round head.
He had peaceful dark brown eyes. I
melted within those pools of cocoa
brown. Max stood at attention toward
the end of my bed—the beige guest
couch, nestled within the middle of the
living room. Max was a cage-free social
butterfly, and I was in the center of his
house.

Max sat perched in the corner. When he wasn’t playing with my
toes, he was eating little lettuce cups,
grooming his luxurious nest of hair,
watching and waiting for the humans
in his life to arrive. Pellets of food and
an abundance of hay were scattered
in cups and bowls throughout the
apartment. He was king of this palace.
Fresh food was within reach wherever
he might roam in the bunny-proofed
home. Within the cage and rabbit den,
water, clean bedding, and toys were
placed for Max to access at his leisure.
He slept on the ground floor level while
his primary caregiver slept and worked
in the loft. As the house guest, I spent
most of my time near Max, who grew
closer to me every day.

I painted my toes a soothing pale
orange like the color of a fresh summer
carrot. Max nipped my orange toes un-
til I awakened. His nose twitched and
his whiskers fluttered and thrummed
like cattails in a breeze. His choco-
late-brown eyes trained on me and my
every move. I smiled and grinned at
him. I lightly petted him on the head
and stroked his large watermelon-sized
body.

We formed a routine. He got to nip
my toes to wake me up so I didn’t need
to set an alarm. We ate breakfast to-
gether. He ate hay, pellets, and greens
while I had water, granola, and fruit.
We sat silently together. I cooed at him
and he buzzed at me in the curious
way rabbits do. We found each other
eyery morning.

Max’s silky locks tended to clump
in little knots. It was too much for a
rabbit to handle alone. Max’s primary
caretaker had been trained by a profes-
sional to manage his hair. She brushed
and groomed Max’s locks down to a
manageable, clump-free length. By
grooming Max, she reduced the risk
of stasis (digestive stoppage) from his
ingesting fur as he cleaned himself.

One hot evening, Max’s caretaker
gave Max a hair trimming. Unfortu-
nately, she opted to use scissors to
clip out a large tangle. On that night, I
wished for a better choice. The scissors
slipped and Max was cut. The silvery,
sharp blade passed through Max’s skin.
Looking at the wound, I shivered. The
caretaker was quick on her feet. With a
list of emergency animal hospitals that
treated rabbits, she immediately found
one nearby. We packed Max up in a
warm blanket and pet carrier, and then
sped down the highway.

We arrived to find a team of nurses
and veterinarians ready for us. There
were about six of them in scrubs
standing beneath the bright florescent
lights. I was in awe that there were so
many of them ready to help. My friend
took the lead in talking to the doctors,
while I backed myself into a corner of
the room and stared at the shiny walls,
aware of hushed conversation. I tried
not to get in the way so my friend Max
could get the best care.

In a circle around Max, the med-
ical team and my friend looked like a
football team in a huddle conversing
about strategies. After determining
that Max needed stitches, the staff was
ready to begin the procedure.

Max escaped from the phalanx and
softly padded the twenty feet across
the cold linoleum floor to me. He faced
me with his heart-shaped face and
chocolate-brown eyes looking directly
into mine. His round, heavy bottom
was planted on my toes as he tucked
his warm body into my legs. In his own
bunny way, Max had asked me to hold
his hand. After one of the vets retrieved
Max and placed him on the table, I left
the room to wait and pace the lobby.

After Max’s wound was stitched
up, he was sent home to heal, his
caretaker armed with medicine and
instructions. Follow-up appointments
were arranged so the vet could monitor
his progress. Thankfully, my friend
achieved a full recovery and returned
to his usual Max-like antics. My pastel
toes were still nipped. He was still the
king of the palace and a social butter-
fly. We were all very lucky that
night to survive what could have been
a disaster.

Seventeen years later, I still think
of Max, who left a strong impression on
me. Since my early childhood, mem-
bers of my animal family included a
cat, fish, and hamsters, though I never
shared space with a rabbit before Max.
Our time together opened my eyes to
the possibility. A week ago, I adopted a
rabbit who had been abandoned by his
previous family. I was ready to give this
rabbit a home because Max opened his
home to me.

Drawing of “Abby” by Nicolette Frandsen
The Value of Adopting an Older Rabbit
by Allegra Jacobs

We all know the value of adopting a rabbit. Nothing warms the heart of an animal lover more than taking home a furry friend who had a rough start in life and then giving them paradise. Oftentimes, paradise is only the basics of proper rabbit care, not a strain for dedicated pet caregivers at all. Seeing that first peaceful sleep once they’re home, or watching them enjoy that first special treat, does more than make you smile. It makes your heart feel whole. And this doesn’t apply to just rabbit lovers; it applies to all of us who have rescued an animal at some point.

Yet, I still see people who would ordinarily do anything for an animal refuse to adopt a senior into their home, for fear that that animal’s shorter lifespan will make it that much harder to let them go when the time comes. For me, age does not make any sort of difference in an animal’s eligibility to be adopted. In fact, when I first inquired about bringing my rabbit Joker home, I wasn’t even aware that he was pushing eight years (eight to fourteen years is the average lifespan of a house rabbit). He needed a home as much as the others did, plus he was sweet and accepted all my petting. Was the fact that his time with me would likely be shorter than that of a young rabbit really that much of an inhibitor?

No. In fact, it was the opposite. I almost preferred to take this senior rabbit home with me, as I feel it’s harder for a senior animal to be in a shelter than it is for a younger one. I don’t know much about Joker’s past besides what I can piece together from his short intake history. He lived with a family who fed him and cleaned his cage daily, yet his cage was actually too small for a full-grown rabbit, and he resided in the garage of the house.

My bunny boy had little interaction, little entertainment, and was left to his own devices for the majority of his days. When he was surrendered, he had nothing to his name except age and a bit of an attitude.

So what are the benefits of adopting a senior? I knew as well as any other rabbit caretaker that their silence and reserved demeanors are no excuse for lack of providing exercise and stimulation, so when I took Joker home with me, he was immediately allowed to roam wherever he pleased in the house, with an open cage door at all times for proper comings and goings. I bunny-proofed within an inch of my life his first week home, hiding cords and electrical outlets, as well as anything else I thought he would sink his teeth into. But, surprisingly, he didn’t. He didn’t then and, almost a year later, he still hasn’t at all.

Fellow bunny parents envy the fact that I have multiple computer chargers and cords around the house, as well as a printer and Wi-Fi router in plain sight, ready for bunny destruction—but Joker doesn’t touch a thing. He lives out his retirement
sleeping, devouring fruits and veggies, and keeping me company while I read or do schoolwork. He doesn’t get into mischief and is happiest when given a towel or two to nap on, as to him it is pure cloud nine. He is a simple guy, and simple things are more than enough for him, considering where he came from. My mother even questioned why he has no interest in destroying my house.

“He’s old,” I told her. “He’s past all that.”

This brings us back to the original reason why we love to adopt: because we are giving animals a second chance at happiness, and at that paradise-type life we know we can offer. The icing on the cake here for me is that Joker lived so many years in a cage hung in a garage, and now, as a senior, he is finally home, and finally living the life he deserves.

The golden years for any animal should be their sweetest; giving Joker a loving home to live out his final years was the least I could do. Seniors are appreciative of the care you offer them in ways younger animals can’t yet be because there’s more of a chance they’ve suffered hardships than younger animals. Every single senior in a shelter was given up in their elderly years by people who did not want to (or could not) make time for them anymore. Be the person who makes those last days, no matter how many or how few, peaceful for that animal. When they die, honor their life by saving another. Love with all you have, do not discriminate by age, gender, or breed and give seniors a special chance. All lives are special, and all deserve a second chance.

If you are interested in adopting a senior animal, inquire at your local shelter/rescue and see what you can do to help. Some shelters have grants set aside to help with senior animal care and costly medical bills, and hospice programs often allow a senior animal in his or her last days to live in a home at no cost to the adopter. Shelters are ready and willing to help if it means that a senior gets a chance at a loving home. Don’t let the fear of vet bills prevent you from inquiring further!

WRITE FOR US!

We’re seeking submissions for House Rabbit Journal and we would love to have your contribution! You can find out more information, including submission deadlines, on our website:

rabbit.org/hrjsubmissions
Some time ago I read an article in *House Rabbit Journal* that stayed with me. It was a fictional piece about bunnies looking for their forever homes, and the plain ones talking to each other about the fancy ones who got adopted out first. Right away I rooted for the underdog. The whole unfairness of the way the world sometimes works was right there in those words.

In 2006, I talked Rick, my husband, into getting a bunny. We went to House Rabbit Society and I let him choose. He picked Westopher because Westopher was small, a dwarf. But Westopher was plain brown. I agreed reluctantly. In my mind, I had wanted a spotted bunny like I had seen on Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley, California in 1982. That bunny was very big, black and white spotted, and wearing a turquoise harness on a turquoise leash. The bunny’s owner put up with my slack-jawed amazement. I didn’t know bunnies could look like that.

I was brought up being told that animals in nature don’t have emotions. They are just animals. I never believed that. Having a pet bunny like Westopher who looked like a field bunny taught me for sure that animals in the wild are living beings with the ability to love and bond and care about each other.

Keeping a bunny in the house instead of outside in a hutch was once a new idea for me. In the past, a bunny wasn’t commonly considered a house pet and family member. Maybe this is a step toward more animals being given affection. If a field bunny has feelings, why not a skunk? Or an opossum? The bigger implication is that all these field critters have souls as sure as the house bunny does, and should not be seen as garden pests.

At first I knew nothing about relating to bunnies. The advice I had was to get on the floor with them, so I did. Westopher curled into a neutral, nondescript lump and I petted him and talked to him. I tried speaking French to him. I tried speaking some gibberish. He just stared at me. I gave him an empty gallon water bottle to play with and his small feet pedaled it. We put up a pet gate to keep his world small and safe. In a few weeks, we started letting him in the living room. I still can’t get over the strange delight of watching a
bunny hop around my living room, an opening into a world that wasn't accessible before.

Within a few months, Westopher was letting me hold him on my stomach for hours. It was just what I needed. Then, somehow, I managed to talk Rick into a friend for Westopher. So, we returned to HRS and adopted Picasso, a beautiful spotted bunny like the fancy one I originally had in mind.

Picasso didn't like to be on the couch and would squirm away, and end up spending lonely hours in their cage at night while I held Westopher. I knew he was shy, so I loved him for his soft beauty.

When we lost Little Westopher in 2013, I wanted to find another friend for Picasso. It was sad to see Picasso grooming the stuffed bear I put in his cage to keep him company.

I knew what I was looking for in a new bunny. But, of course, it mattered more who Picasso wanted.

When they brought Martha out, she was big and light brown like a common field bunny. She had very big ears and long eyelashes. I looked at the expression in her eyes. She seemed to be tolerating this game of being examined and judged with a grain of salt. She was plain. When they carried her away, she sat upright obediently in the volunteer's arms, her big ears disappearing into the distance around the corner. I knew she knew she had been passed by. And it felt like she knew why.

We came back a second time to meet more bunnies. There were some unusual looking ones that I wanted to like, but no one clicked. The way Martha's ears had looked as they took her away had stuck in my mind, somehow touching me.

I told Rick I was considering Martha. Then someone sitting in the room said that Martha followed the staff around like a dog. This was what I had waited to hear. And she and Picasso were compatible. We took her home.

Martha was not afraid like Picasso was. Where Picasso hid behind the table, Martha went out into the middle of the living room and plopped down in front of the TV, her back legs spread behind her, a sign of comfort. Soon I noticed Picasso out of his cage in front of the mirror instead of behind it, waiting for her. He liked her chutzpah! And he wasn't hiding! It was so different from the way he had been second bunny with Westopher.

I put Martha up on the couch to see if she would cuddle. She was too big and spindly to fit on my lap so she curled up next to me. Every day now she gets up on the couch to wait for me, leaving enough room for me to sit down in the space between her and the arm.

I realized Martha is a caregiver, sensing my need for contact, and also taking care of Picasso's need for attention and connection. She has figured out what is needed in our home, and in her aware and big-hearted way, gives it.

Martha taught me a life lesson about bunnies. Don't go for a bunny simply because that bunny is good-looking. Go for good because all bunnies are good. Go for kind because all bunnies are kind. Go for a bunny who picks you. If you're adopting a friend for your bunny, go for the bunny who wants to be friends with your bunny. Be patient and open-minded. Don't overlook a bunny simply because that bunny is plain.
(continued from page 5)

**TASTE A NEW TREAT**

Experts agree an unlimited amount of fresh hay, supplemented with a green salad a day and vet-recommended pellets is essential for a rabbit’s daily diet. But bunnies’ tastes are fairly diverse. Some healthy foods that rabbits may enjoy as treats are radish tops, green pepper, cilantro, and basil. Some treats though, like grapes and other small pieces of fruit, should only be given once or twice per day because they are high in sugar. Todd and Zoey have “Treat Time” in the evening after playtime. Treat Time has become a ritual with a little bit of pageantry involved. Yes, there is even a Treat Time song. When I start singing, the bunnies run in circles and stand up, practically falling over each other. The veggies are handed over with much fanfare. One day we tried a half grape each, and it was a juicy mess. Needless to say, they loved it, so grapes are a treat we look forward to.

**REDECORATE AND REMODEL**

If you’re tired of cleaning a cage, maybe try using a more spacious exercise pen, which is easier to keep clean. Or if your rabbit is housed in one area of the house, maybe adding some new territory could spice things up. Wherever you spend time in your home, that’s where your rabbit will want to be most because rabbits are social. They often want to be where the action is. At the same time, it is important to provide a quiet location for retreat as well.

Opening a bigger space for your rabbit can give them more options to explore. It can also give you more room to play with them. Bunnies who get sufficient playtime are less likely to chew at bars and more likely to be happier and less destructive.

**TRY A NEW TOY**

Toys are a great tool to encourage bonding between humans and rabbits. They help give rabbits mental stimulation, inspire play, and encourage physical activity. And playtime is fun for people too! Some safe toys include paper bags, cardboard boxes (big and small), untreated willow baskets, and paper. Try filling a willow basket or cardboard box with shredded paper. Rabbits playing with toys can sometimes look like they are hard at work. They will bite, tear, shred, claw, and even toss their toys. This can be fun to watch and gently participate in.

As a fun exercise, try to think of a toy your rabbit has never played with before. Maybe your bun would like an oatmeal tube to roll across the floor, or a stack of bunny-safe plastic baby toys stacked into a tower to knock down. Todd and Zoey are especially fond of paper towel tubes. They like to eat them, throw them, dig on them, and jump over them. A paper towel tube stuffed with timothy hay is an all-day activity.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT RABBITS**

For any rabbit guardian, including supervised young children and adults, learning more about rabbits can offer new avenues for fun and bonding. Discovering new activities, games, tastes, and quirks together can only strengthen your rabbit-human relationship. As we learn more about rabbits, we are able to take better care of their health, happiness, and overall well-being. In return, we earn their love.

A healthy rabbit-human relationship is absolutely essential to the well-being of house rabbits and the happiness of their guardians. When the relationship stays fresh, both rabbits and humans are happy. So, if you find yourself talking to a rabbit guardian who feels half-hearted about their relationship, help them learn more about the uniqueness of their special pet. A human effort toward rekindling the relationship can reap rewards for everyone involved.
Chervil and China
by Lulu James

Chervil and China are two lovely rabbits who live in Anne's garden in leafy West Hampstead. The little guys may be shy but there's much more to them than that: all they need is a chance to show Anne they can make excellent house pets.

China and her buddy are old enough to know not to nibble on blankets and floorboards. They'd love to run around the living room, explore the house from top to bottom, and even train for the London Marathon!

These bunnies are not just beautiful; they are bright and inquisitive, an asset to any household. They'll quickly fit in with Anne's routine, be friends with the cats and the tortoise.

So next time Anne invites me for tea, I hope the bunnies will have moved in as nothing could be nicer than sharing your home with Chervil and China.

earning trust, for my rescue rabbit
by Jessi Hank

soft spotted rabbit sneers at feeding hands, paws
scratch away affection, teeth scrape against extended fingertips.

late lettuce and pellets on a saturday night threaten trust, accumulate worry in laurels. stamp. stamp.

hello, are you hungry satellite ears turn, twist toward the noise of a gentle human voice.

whiteness around irises reduces, brown moons gleam, replace terror with friendly curiosity: nose nudge to wrist.

brush against forehead, heavy eyelids, a grumbled chitter churns behind tiny lips. shoulders readjust, body melts.

cities of cups tumble down onto carpet, long-eared godzilla crumbles the towers, sees structures as playthings.

sunday morning runaround races up stairs, through tunnels, onto the couch, pausing briefly to sniff hello.
Build Your Bunny a Holiday Tree!

by Jessica Tok

December brings cooler weather in the Northern hemisphere, maybe even frost and snow, and anticipation of the upcoming holiday season. There's no reason your furry rabbit friends should be left out of festive occasions such as Christmas, but sometimes it is hard to find an appropriate bunny-friendly gift. The bunny-safe holiday tree featured here makes a cheerful present. Best of all, the entire tree is made of fully edible parts, so minimal supervision is required, and there will be enough vegetables left over for both you and bunny to enjoy a healthy salad later.

Ingredients

- 1 head of Romaine lettuce
- 1 bunch of Lacinto kale
- 1 bunch of curly kale
- Carrot
- Blueberries, strawberries, banana slices
- add your bunny's favorite treats!

Make the Tree

1. Cut the bottom 1/3 of the Romaine lettuce. This will be the base of your tree and provide structural support.
2. Pick the thickest and most straight rib of kale. Strip off the leaf. This will be the trunk of the tree.
3. Bore a hole in the bottom of the romaine's base. Stick the stem of kale into it.
4. Cut the largest green portions of the remaining romaine and kale. These will be the leaves of your tree. Cut an "X" into the middle of each leaf.
5. Starting at the bottom, thread the X-cut leaves onto the trunk from biggest to smallest. Wrap a piece of curly kale around the top in a cone shape. Your tree is complete! Set it aside on a separate plate.

Add the Decorations

1. To make a carrot star, bias cut the carrot to create an oval carrot slice, then slice the bottom to make a stand for the star. Then make a cut through the middle of the stand. Cut the rest of the carrot to create a star shape.
2. Make a vertical slice through the top of the tree trunk (kale stem).
3. Place the stand of the carrot into the sliced kale stem.
4. Decorate your tree by gently placing thin carrot slices, berries, and thin banana slices on the leaves. Serve immediately!
Nearly 200 House Rabbit Society Educators, as well as rabbit rescuers from across the country, attended the 2017 HRS Educational Conference, “Growing Your Knowledge of Rabbit Care and Welfare” October 20–22nd, 2017 in San Diego, California. San Diego House Rabbit Society hosted the conference. HRS Educators had a chance to reunite with fellow educators. Other participants had an opportunity to get to know acquaintances they previously only met through social media. Names familiar to thousands of rabbit advocates from all over the world were part of the program. Among the speakers were Margo DeMello, PhD, President of the international House Rabbit Society, and Anne Martin, PhD, Executive Director of House Rabbit Society. Among the attendees was Marinell Harriman, founder of House Rabbit Society and author of “The House Rabbit Handbook: How to Live with an Urban Rabbit.” Seminars included Debby Widolf’s, “Staying Strong in Animal Rescue,” in a presentation so emotional that it brought lots of attendees to tears. Alison Giese’s, “Rabbit Agility Training and Course Building” with help from Penny the rabbit, brought smiles. Veterinarians, rescuers, and other experts took the stage both days, while a variety of vendors made shopping easy and fun. Video recordings of the presentations are here: rabbit.org/educatorconference

We’d like to thank our donors and sponsors, without whom this conference would not have happened. This was the second educators’ conference. The first was held in St. Louis in 2014. Stay tuned for information on our next conference!

-Linda Cook
LEAVE A LEGACY FOR THE RABBITS
PLEASE CONSIDER HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

Please contact HRS Executive Director, Anne Martin at anne@rabbit.org for more information